United Nations A/58/PV.93

General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

93rd plenary meeting
Thursday, 5 August 2004, 3 p.m.
New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 17 *(continued)*

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(h) Appointment of a member of the Joint Inspection Unit

Note by the President of the General Assembly (A/58/111)

The President: As indicated in document A/58/111, in accordance with the procedures described in article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, and having consulted the regional group concerned, as well as through a consultation by secret ballot with the General Assembly, I requested Japan to propose a candidate.

As further indicated in document A/58/111, as a result of the consultations held in accordance with article 3, paragraph 2, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, including consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council and with the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, I submit to the Assembly the candidature of Mr. Tadanori Inomata of Japan for appointment as a member of the Joint Inspection Unit for a five-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2005 and expiring on 31 December 2009.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to appoint that candidate?

It was so decided.

Mr. Ozawa (Japan): As the General Assembly has just decided to appoint Ambassador Tadanori Inomata as a member of the Joint Inspection Unit for a five-year term beginning on 1 January 2005, I would like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation for that decision. I also wish to express my firm belief that Ambassador Inomata, a person of superb qualifications for that appointment, will make significant contributions to the work of that important body.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (h) of agenda item 17.

Agenda item 23 *(continued)*

Sport for peace and development

(a) Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal (A/58/863)

The President: I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/58/863, which contains the text of the solemn appeal that I made on 4 August 2004 in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce.

I will now read out the solemn appeal:

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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"On 3 November 2003, the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/6, in which it urged Member States to observe the Olympic Truce during the Games of the XXVIII Olympiad to be held in Athens from 13 to 29 August 2004.

"The sacred Greek tradition of *ekecheiria* (truce) constituted the cornerstone of the Olympic Games in ancient times, providing safety and a peaceful environment for both the athletes competing in the Games and for the spectators in attendance. Its very adoption was dictated by the oracle of Delphi as a way to put an end to the wars that at the time devastated the Peloponnese. The longest lasting peace accord in history was thus created.

"Olympism was revived in 1896, aiming at contributing to a peaceful future for mankind through the educational value of sport. The Olympic Movement brings together the youth of the world in a great sports festival, promoting peace, friendship, solidarity and fair play.

"Since 1993, support for the Olympic Truce has grown steadily within the General Assembly, reaching the unprecedented unanimous co-sponsorship of last year's resolution. During these turbulent times, Member States are demonstrating their confidence in the Olympic Truce Ideal.

"This year, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, we received the Olympic Flame at United Nations Headquarters. It travelled around the globe, through 26 countries and 34 cities, covering all five continents. It carried the message of hope for a world free from hatred and war, a world where ideals of peace, goodwill and mutual respect form the basis of relations among peoples and countries.

"Observing the Olympic Truce means constructing bridges of communication between adversaries, allowing the youth of the world to peacefully participate in the Olympic Games and creating the necessary infrastructure for the continuation of dialogue and the renewal of hope for reconciliation, both during the Games and throughout the four-year period of Olympiads.

"In times of violence and uncertainty, of war and struggle, when security becomes a pressing concern, we must always remember that defensive mechanisms need to be paralleled by resolute efforts to promote dialogue and understanding among peoples and Governments and to adhere to the ideals for which the Olympic Truce stands.

"We are confident that the appropriate measures taken by Greece, in close cooperation with the international community, will ensure the staging of the Games in a safe and peaceful environment.

"I, therefore, solemnly appeal to all States to demonstrate their commitment to peace in the world by observing the Olympic Truce during the XXVIII Olympic Games in Athens. While conflicts in the world will not cease overnight, if we could have peace for sixteen days, then, maybe, just maybe, we could have it forever." (*A/58/863*)

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the solemn appeal made in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 23 and of agenda item 23 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 59 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft resolution (A/58/L.67/Rev.1)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this agenda item, together with agenda items 55, 57 and 58, at its 43rd to 46th plenary meetings.

I give the floor to the representative of Malaysia to introduce draft resolution A/58/L.67/Rev.1.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): On behalf of the countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement, I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly a draft resolution under agenda item 59, entitled "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and

the promotion of international cooperation", contained in document A/58/L.67/Rev.1 dated 30 July 2004.

Developments in global affairs in recent years have raised, and continue to raise, serious concerns about the primacy of the United Nations and its relevance in the multilateral decision-making process. The consequences of those circumstances have, inter alia, given rise to expressions of grave concern by many countries over the gradual erosion and weakening of the role of the United Nations as the primary interlocutor in addressing global challenges in the political, economic and social fields and in fulfilling its responsibility as envisaged in the Charter.

That weakening of the role of the United Nations and the need to restore and strengthen the Organization's position in the multilateral system was emphasized by almost every leader who addressed the general debate of the current session of the General Assembly last September. Public perception of the erosion and weakening of the role of the United Nations has also been repeatedly echoed by the general public, civil society and mass media all over the world.

The Non-Aligned Movement remains convinced that the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations remain paramount and relevant today. In fact, the founding principles of the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as those of many other intergovernmental organizations, are primarily premised on the very purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. They have proven to be the most universal and effective tool and code of conduct in addressing the challenges faced by the international community. The Non-Aligned Movement therefore believes that it is incumbent upon the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative and policy-making organ of the United Nations, to reaffirm these overarching elements in the face of the current state of global affairs.

The draft resolution contains five preambular paragraphs and 14 operative paragraphs. It is intended to be a broad-based initiative for States Members of the United Nations to reaffirm their support for and political commitment and adherence to the central role of the United Nations in the fulfilment of its role and responsibilities as envisaged in the Charter. It essentially calls for Member States to, inter alia, fully respect, comply with and observe the principles of the Charter and international law, reaffirm their commitment to multilateralism and express support for the strengthening of the United Nations system.

The operative paragraphs touch on the core issues central to the United Nations and several items on its agenda, including international cooperation for development, the right to self-determination, disarmament, human rights and terrorism. I must admit that that is not an exhaustive list of issues confronting the international community in our efforts to establish peace and security and a prosperous world for all. It is just a reflection of the many fundamental issues that must be addressed collectively by the international community, with the United Nations playing the central role and providing a level playing field for all nations, big and small, rich and poor, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.

In the face of the serious challenges confronting this Organization, the Non-Aligned Movement strongly believes that it is timely for Member States to reaffirm their unequivocal support to the United Nations, pledging full observance of the Charter and respect for the principles and purposes enshrined in it. It is our sincere intention that the draft resolution, once it has been adopted, will provide a strong political platform and commitment that will pave the way towards facilitating all efforts to enhance the role of this most universal international Organization in the maintenance of peace and security and the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

As an attempt to facilitate consensus and minimize differences on the text, several paragraphs, and the central ideas contained therein, have been inspired by or extracted from the Charter, relevant United Nations resolutions adopted by consensus and landmark declarations. The new ideas proposed in the text are intended to add value to the thrust of the draft resolution and are confined to its context. In addition, the sponsors of the draft resolution have carefully refrained from incorporating into the text details or specifics concerning several issues. This reflects our desire to respond to the call for short and concise General Assembly resolutions, in keeping with the spirit of the revitalization of this principal organ of the United Nations.

The sponsors of the draft resolution would like to express the most sincere appreciation to all States Members of the United Nations for their views, comments and suggestions in the process of the

drafting of the resolution. It is our fervent hope that, after its adoption by the General Assembly, the draft resolution will serve as an additional tool to bolster our collective determination and efforts aimed at renewing and reinvigorating the United Nations in pursuit of its aims and objectives, in particular in the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of international cooperation.

The Non-Aligned Movement has made serious efforts and shown a high degree of flexibility so as to ensure the adoption of this text by consensus. Several open-ended informal consultations and "informal informals" were convened by the Movement over the past two months with our negotiating partners. These have, indeed, enabled us to improve the substance of the text. We are grateful for the contributions, suggestions and views expressed by our negotiating partners. Many of them have been incorporated into the text of the draft resolution before us. Nonetheless, we recognize that it would be almost impossible to reflect and satisfy the concerns and interests of everyone. We are satisfied that the text that is now before the Assembly is a product of a very intensive negotiating process and bears the fingerprints of both the Non-Aligned Movement and our negotiating partners. It is our fervent hope that the draft resolution will receive the broadest possible support from States Members of the United Nations.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/58/L.67/Rev.1.

Before giving the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Toro Jiménez (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has carefully examined the draft resolution under consideration, which we sponsored. We believe that it reflects the principles and objectives underpinning and guiding the development of the Non-Aligned Movement, of which we are a member. From that perspective, it has our full support. We would like, however, to refer to one specific aspect of the content of the draft resolution which requires particular attention. Paragraph 4 refers to the changes we hope to make within the United Nations system. In this legal and political context, my delegation believes that we cannot compromise our principles; no deals can be made in that regard.

Furthermore, with regard to nuclear disarmament, the document takes an unequivocal position on the principles relating to the fostering by States Members of the United Nations of general and complete disarmament.

Where paragraph 4 refers to reform of the Security Council, a form of wording is used that could give rise to a number of different interpretations. For that reason, we believe — and reaffirm here — that, in order to be consistent with our principles, we must ensure that such reform effects far-reaching and structural change in the Security Council, including, of necessity, the elimination of the right of veto. That is our interpretation of the paragraph. In this respect, we are merely reiterating what our President stated at the Millennium Summit: the abolition of the right of veto is a necessary condition for embarking on the process of democratizing the Security Council.

Mr. Laurin (Canada): No country is more committed than Canada to maintaining the vital role of the United Nations in world affairs, and we welcome initiatives that are aimed at strengthening the role and capacity of the United Nations.

Unfortunately, despite its stated intent, the draft resolution before us will not help us to achieve that objective. The draft resolution goes beyond just renewing our commitment to the ideals and purposes of the United Nations: it is interpretive of those ideals and purposes, and it disregards elements that, in Canada's view, are necessary to impart sufficient balance to the text to attract consensus.

The process through which the draft resolution evolved was perhaps in part responsible for the production of a document that does not embody a fully shared vision. It is unfortunate that the draft resolution was circulated to the broader United Nations membership only in mid-May and that there were not the sort of negotiations needed to bring about a consensus — which in our view is crucial to the effectiveness of such a resolution.

On matters of substance, a number of changes that my Government favoured were made, such as welcoming the establishment of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and including references to genocide and crimes against humanity.

For those changes and others, we would like to thank the sponsors of the draft resolution, in particular the delegation of Malaysia, which has made genuine efforts to bring the parties towards consensus.

Unfortunately, the views of Canada on some important issues — particularly the lack of balance in the text as a whole — were not taken on board sufficiently to make it possible for us to vote in favour of the draft resolution. For example, in the context of a draft resolution on the role of the United Nations with regard to international peace and security and international cooperation, we cannot agree to explicitly raising the principles of sovereignty and non-interference without clearly identifying the responsibilities inherent in those principles. Member States carry the primary responsibility to protect their people from threats to their physical security. We believe that, when they fail to do so, the United Nations has a clear responsibility to act. That is one of the most important lessons of the past decade, which we believe needs to be articulated clearly in a draft resolution such as the one before us.

In Canada's view, this draft resolution is selective with regard to our common obligations and, as a result of taking out of context the language of documents quoted, risks distorting their meaning. That in turn could undermine, or at least complicate, the work of the General Assembly on key issues linked to the new realities of the international environment and could contribute to the United Nations seeing the world through outdated and blurred lenses. It is a risk we are not prepared to take.

In conclusion, Canada acknowledges and welcomes the repeated assurances by the sponsors of this draft resolution that it is in no way intended to pre-empt and/or preclude options for the reform of our multilateral architecture, such as those that may emerge from the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change or from the much-anticipated special event in September 2005. We are grateful to the sponsors for their assurances, as this is an extremely important issue to my Government.

Regretfully, for those reasons, Canada has no choice but to abstain in the voting on this draft resolution.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/58/L.67/Rev.1, entitled "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of international cooperation".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution A/58/L.67/Rev.1 was adopted by 93 votes to 2, with 47 abstentions (resolution 58/317).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Bangladesh, Botswana and Burkina Faso informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Stoffer (United States of America): Let me say a few words about the resolution that we have considered today. The United States believes that this resolution is premature, since it attempts to address a matter that is currently being reviewed by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. The General Assembly's deliberations on the issues addressed in this resolution could benefit from consideration of the recommendations of the High-Level Panel that are expected on 1 December of this year.

The resolution does not adequately address several issues that are of particular concern to the United States.

First, the resolution reaffirms some principles of international law and not others, thus rendering the text incomplete. Also, the partial inclusion of references taken out of context gives them a meaning different from the carefully balanced framework of the declarations or resolutions from which they were drawn.

Secondly, in its reference to the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction, this resolution fails to address appropriately the issue of proliferation, not only of nuclear weapons, but also of chemical and biological weapons and the means to deliver them. We would have welcomed language in the resolution that clearly acknowledged the approach to proliferation matters that was established by the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), a resolution that is binding on all United Nations Member States.

Thirdly, the resolution mischaracterizes the role of the United Nations in the management of the international economic system. The United States has long maintained that economic and social development in any country is possible only if that country takes on that primary responsibility.

The United States offered alternative language on those matters of concern and sought engagement on our proposals. We regret that the sponsors of this resolution were unable to accommodate our proposals and that we were compelled to vote against the resolution.

Mr. Hamburger (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, I would like to reaffirm the EU's full commitment to an effective multilateral system with a strong United Nations at its core. Effective multilateralism is one of the two pillars on which the Security Strategy of the European Union, adopted in December 2003 by our heads of State or Government, is founded. The fundamental framework for international relations is the United Nations Charter. Further strengthening the United Nations, equipping it to fulfil its responsibilities and to act effectively, is a European priority.

The central role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of international cooperation is a concern of us all. Strengthening that role is a mutual goal and a common responsibility. Decisions in this area should build, more than anything, on this communality of interests and reflect a common approach. We therefore regret all the more that we have had to abstain in the vote on the resolution just adopted in the absence of such an approach.

The reasons for our abstention are threefold and concern timing, process and substance.

First, with regard to timing, as the European Union has indicated from the very beginning, we believe that the present resolution comes too soon. We understand that the initiators wished first and foremost to address concerns over recent political events and their implications for the multilateral system. Those concerns are shared by many. They indeed need to be addressed. As the Secretary-General said in his opening statement to the General Assembly at the

beginning of this session (see A/58/PV.7), we will have to ask ourselves whether the framework that was created in 1945 is still up to its tasks or whether radical changes are needed. He added that in doing so, we should not shy away from questions about the adequacy and effectiveness of the rules and instruments at our disposal.

Debate about these very serious questions has only just started. We expect important input from the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which the Secretary-General has established precisely to look into these and other questions. This is not to say that we can sit back and wait for the Panel's report and the Secretary-General's recommendations based on it. On the contrary, it is our obligation to participate and contribute to the best of our abilities. We will all have to contribute to the discussions in the run-up to the 2005 high-level meeting to review and decide on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences. Adopting a resolution now without reflecting the outcome of that debate is, in our view, premature.

Secondly, with respect to process, notwithstanding our doubts with regard to the timing of the resolution, the European Union engaged actively and constructively in informal consultations. We would like to thank the Mission of Malaysia, in particular Ambassador Mohd Radzi Abdul Rahman, for the time and effort invested in the informal meetings. We would also like to express appreciation for the amendments that were accepted, through which part of the text became more balanced.

At the same time, we cannot but regret the fact that there was no occasion for actual and textual negotiations. In real negotiations, delegations may find that, although their stated positions differ, the interests behind those positions do not necessarily have to be mutually exclusive and that, eventually, satisfactory results can be achieved. This, in our view, has been a missed opportunity.

Finally, with regard to substance, as I said, we appreciate some of the changes that were made to the text, such as the recognition of the work of the Panel and the inclusion of a reference to preventing and ending genocide. Nevertheless, some more fundamental problems remained for the European Union, which contributed to our decision to abstain. Let me mention the four most prominent ones.

First, by reaffirming and underlining certain principles without mentioning others, the text contains an imbalance. For example, emphasis is put on the principles of the sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of nations. The European Union acknowledges and accepts those principles. However, there is a flip side to that, and that is the responsibility that States have vis-à-vis their own populations. We feel that this notion could and should have been adequately reflected in the text.

Secondly, on human rights, the European Union is of the opinion that constructive dialogue is a means of protecting and promoting human rights, but not the exclusive means, as the text seems to imply.

Thirdly, on the use of force and other measures, the Charter contains provisions allowing the use of force and the exercise of pressure and coercion under certain conditions. Those are listed in Chapter VII, in particular in Article 51. Without a reference to those provisions, the text, in our view, is not complete.

Fourthly and finally, the European Union is of the opinion that the text as adopted remains unbalanced — I am referring here to operative paragraph 12 — with most of the emphasis on nuclear disarmament; non-proliferation is mentioned only in passing, without an explicit reference to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Again, the European Union feels regret and even frustration that it had to abstain on a resolution on such an important issue. Nonetheless, the European Union is fully committed to continuing our joint efforts in building a United Nations that can deal more effectively with peace, security and development, thereby indeed strengthening the central role of the United Nations in matters of common and global concern.

Mr. Ozawa (Japan): Let me take this opportunity to pay tribute to the initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement, which proposed the draft resolution adopted as resolution 58/317, as well as to the coordinating role of the Malaysian delegation.

Japan shares the view that in this increasingly interdependent and globalized world, it is important for us, the Member States, to continue our efforts to strengthen multilateral frameworks for cooperation. Japan is of the view that the United Nations, with its universal membership and broad mandate, should

continue to play its unique role, which no other international organization can fulfil.

However, taking into account the nature of this resolution and the goal that it is intended to achieve, we strongly believe that further efforts should have been made to adopt the resolution by consensus. Japan abstained in the vote on this resolution because we do not think that every effort was made to reach consensus. We regret the fact that a vote was taken on this matter, perhaps giving the impression to the outside world that we, the Member States, are divided in reaffirming the central role of the United Nations.

Mr. Gómez Robledo (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico supported the adoption of draft resolution A/58/L.67/Rev.1, introduced by Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, because we fully share its objective: to reaffirm the commitment of Member States to the strengthening of multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and in the promotion of development.

Like other countries, the Mexican delegation participated in the consultations on the draft resolution, and we shall seek all means at our disposal to continue cooperating with the Non-Aligned Movement on matters of common interest such as the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the fight against terrorism. Obviously, we would have wished that there had been more time for consultations and further opportunity to achieve a draft resolution that could be adopted by consensus.

In that regard, and in keeping with resolution 58/187, adopted on 22 December 2003, Mexico reaffirms its unequivocal condemnation of all acts, methods and practices of terrorism in all their forms and manifestations, wherever and by whomsoever committed, regardless of their motivation, as criminal and unjustifiable, and we extend our commitment to international cooperation to prevent and combat that scourge, with the understanding that all measures States take to combat terrorism must conform to their obligations under international law, in particular the norms relative to human rights and refugees, and under international humanitarian law.

Accordingly, it is Mexico's interpretation that the reference to international law contained in paragraph 11 of resolution 58/317 clearly includes all international norms relative to human rights, refugees and international humanitarian law.

Mexico is confident that the resolution cannot in any way be interpreted as prejudging the reforms that are so sorely needed if our Organization is truly able to tackle the old and new threats that are jeopardizing the maintenance of international peace and security. One such threat is the lack of a truly efficient system of collective security. In this regard, Mexico looks forward to the report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change appointed by the Secretary-General and reaffirms its commitment to the necessary adoption of new approaches to deal with the new realities facing the international community as a whole.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation voted in favour of draft resolution A/58/L.67/Rev.1, introduced by Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We believe it to be an important initiative towards further strengthening the principle of multilateralism in international affairs. However, we do not consider the language in paragraph 12 relating to the issue of nuclear disarmament to be entirely acceptable; nor do we believe that it is properly balanced.

Russia's position on this issue is well known and has been repeatedly stated within the United Nations. The process of disarmament, of which nuclear disarmament is a part, must be comprehensive and must be pursued on the basis of the relevant international treaties and agreements and together with the strengthening of security and stability worldwide. Efforts to ensure the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems are particularly important. However, the resolution's clear reaffirmation of the central role of the United Nations in ensuring international peace and security and developing cooperation among States is also important. In accordance with the Charter, the Security Council has the major responsibility for ensuring international peace and security. For its part, the Russian Federation will continue actively to foster the further strengthening of the effectiveness of the activities of the Security Council and of the United Nations as a whole in that important area.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 59.

Agenda item 61

Multilingualism

Letter from the Permanent Representative of France to the President of the General Assembly (A/58/862)

The President: Members will recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting held on 19 September 2003, the General Assembly included this item on the agenda of the fifty-eighth session. In connection with this item, the Assembly now has before it a letter dated 13 July 2004 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly.

In the letter, the Permanent Representative of France, on behalf of the States members of the Intergovernmental Agency of la Francophonie, informed me of their intention to request the inclusion of this item as an additional item on the agenda of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, with the understanding that the biennial character of the item will not be called into question and that any resolution adopted at the fifty-ninth session of the Assembly on this item will refer explicitly to the sixty-first session.

Bearing in mind the understanding stated in the letter, may I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-ninth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 61.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.

United Nations A/58/PV.94

General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

94th plenary meeting
Friday, 10 September 2004, 10 a.m.
New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Expression of sympathy to the Governments and the peoples of the countries of the Caribbean in connection with the recent hurricanes in that region

The President: Before proceeding to the item on our agenda, I should like, on behalf of the members of the General Assembly, to extend our deepest sympathy to the Governments and the peoples of the countries of the Caribbean, particularly Grenada, the Bahamas, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Cuba, for the tragic loss of life and extensive material damage that they have suffered from the recent hurricanes in the area.

In addition, even as we speak, the countries of Jamaica, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the United States are being threatened by yet another hurricane. We hope that they will be spared. May I also express the hope that the international community will show solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any requests for assistance and any appeal for aid from the countries in the Caribbean in their present plight.

I now call on the representative of Grenada.

Mr. Stanislaus (Grenada): Let me, on behalf of my delegation, first thank our President of the General Assembly, Mr. Julian Hunte, for bringing to the attention of the international community, in a most forceful and appealing manner, the plight of my country, Grenada, which has been especially ravaged by killer hurricane "Ivan the Terrible", as it is now known.

I speak to you from the profound depths of my heart as I provide a bird's-eye view of the unspeakable fury and incalculable destruction wrought by this category-4 hurricane, packing 140-mile-per-hour winds as its eye traversed our small island for two hours. It swept away everything in its path, including human lives, buildings, trees, vegetation and whatever else it could find. Most of the buildings are reduced to rubble. The few left standing are roofless and without windows. The country is without electricity, has little food and water, and communication within and outside Grenada has been at a standstill for many days. Schools, hospitals, churches, police stations and even the prison are either damaged or destroyed. In short, the infrastructure of my country appears to be non-existent. This has dramatically changed the social and ecological landscape of the country. We are teetering on the slippery slope of infrastructural destruction.

However, thanks to neighbouring islands in the Caribbean and to the British, French and Americans in the region, a semblance of life is returning, as emergency access is now being gained with great difficulty. Since 90 per cent of the country has been destroyed, we are now facing an Herculean task, which can only be met by massive assistance from the international community for an immediate and sustained period. This is why I am making this appeal to the General Assembly of the United Nations and its agencies and to individual countries, individual

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permanent representatives and friends, as well as non-governmental organizations to help relieve the dire situation of my country, which is facing unprecedented perils.

The vulnerability of small island developing States to natural disasters is an Achilles heel over which we have no control. Nature, in its supremacy — sometimes benevolent, sometimes destructive — holds a threatening sword of Damocles over our islands. This is directly related to our economic vulnerability, which must seriously be addressed at the upcoming international meeting in Mauritius. In the meantime, Grenada cannot wait. The suffering and the economic misery index of the country have reached staggering and disastrous proportions.

Finally, this may very well be the last opportunity I will have to speak to this honourable body on behalf of my country. I shall demit office at the end of this month as permanent representative, having served almost 13 years and having attained the respectable age of 84 years. I therefore take this opportunity to say farewell and God bless.

The President: I thank the representative of Grenada. The Chair notes his impending departure and would like to wish him well, to congratulate him for the tremendous contribution that he has made on behalf of his country to the General Assembly and the United Nations as a whole and to wish him all the best in the future.

Agenda item 124 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

The President: Next I would like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/58/855/Add. 1 to 3, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/58/855, Benin, Cape Verde and Mauritania have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in these documents?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: reports of the General Committee

Fifth report of the General Committee (A/58/250/Add.4)

The President: In the second paragraph of its report (A/58/250/Add.4), the General Committee recommends that the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, submit to the Assembly at its forthcoming session, in accordance with paragraph 2 (c) of the annex to Assembly resolution 58/316, section II of the report of the Secretary-General, which is entitled "Provisional agenda of the fifty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly organized under headings corresponding to the priorities of the Organization, as contained in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005" and which is contained in document A/58/864.

May I take it that the General Assembly, at its fifty-eighth session, decides to submit to the Assembly, at its forthcoming session, in accordance with paragraph 2 (c) of the annex to resolution 58/316, section II of the report of the Secretary-General?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 3 of the same document, the General Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly, at its fifty-eighth session, submit to the Assembly, at its forthcoming session, in accordance with paragraph 5 (d) of the annex to resolution 58/316, annex I to the report of the Secretary-General, which is entitled "Draft programme of work of the plenary of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session" and which is contained in document A/58/864, as orally revised on the proposal of the representative of the Netherlands, on behalf of the European Union, that item 46 of the draft agenda, "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields", be considered in a joint debate with item 56 of the draft agenda, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit".

May I take it that the General Assembly, at its fifty-eighth session, decides to submit to the Assembly, at its forthcoming session, in accordance with

paragraph 5 (d) of the annex to resolution 58/316, annex I to the report of the Secretary-General, as orally revised on the proposal of the representative of the Netherlands, on behalf of the European Union, that item 46 of the draft agenda be considered in a joint debate with item 56 of the draft agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: I will inform the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session of the decisions just taken, by a letter that will be issued as a document of that session.

Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to inform members that the closing meeting of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly will be held in the General Assembly Hall on Monday, 13 September 2004, at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.